

MASSACHUSETTS RARE AND ENDANGERED PLANTS

SHOWY LADY'S-SLIPPER

(*Cypripedium reginae* Walter)

DESCRIPTION

Showy Lady's-slipper, a member of the Orchid family, is a striking, 2-3 flowered, hairy perennial, usually 15-40" (.35-1m.) tall. The stem bears 3-7 coarse, elliptic to oval leaves, usually 4-9" (10-23cm.) long and 2-5" (5-12cm.) wide. The flowers have white sepals and white lateral petals. The lip petal or "slipper" is white and heavily suffused with magenta. Flowering occurs from mid-June through early-July.

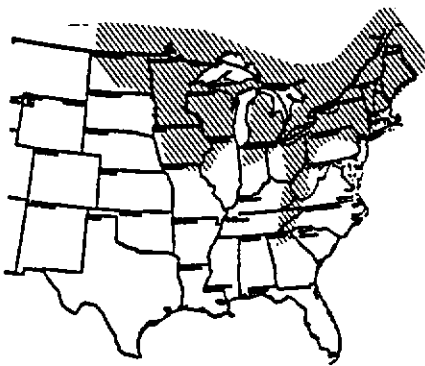
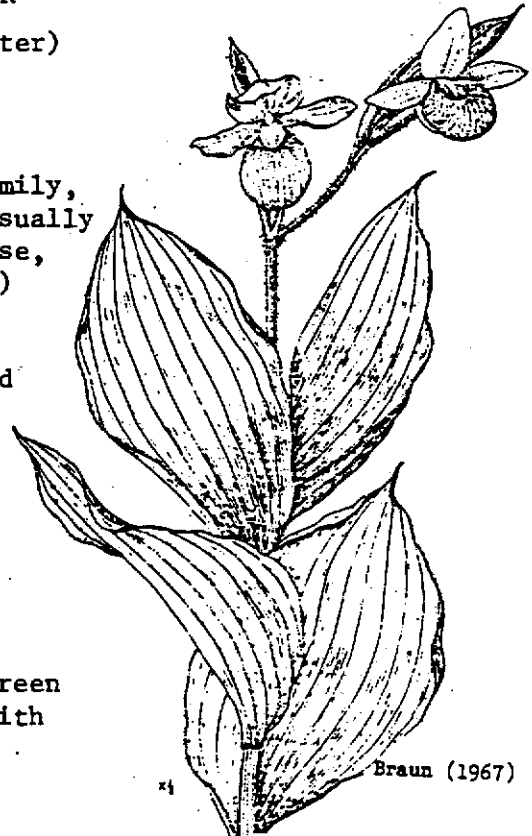
SIMILAR SPECIES IN MASSACHUSETTS

Common Lady's-slipper (*C. acaule*) is similar to Showy Lady's-slipper but is smaller (6-15"; 15-37cm.), produces leaves only at the base of the plant and flowers only at the top of a leafless stem. Sepals and lateral petals are brownish green and the lip is uniformly dark pink and veined with red.

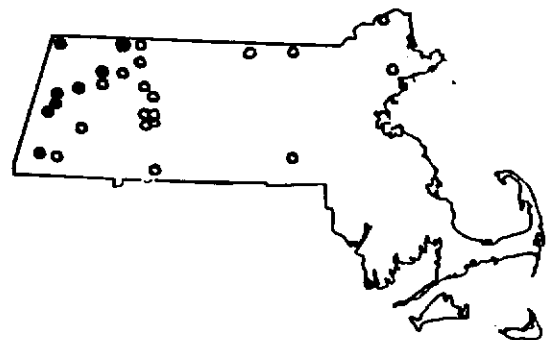
HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS

Showy Lady's-slipper inhabits coniferous forested fens (wet, calcareous swamps) and naturally open peatlands influenced by calcareous (or alkaline) groundwater seepage. These communities tend to be dominated by *Larix laricina* (Larch), *Fraxinus nigra* (Black Ash), *Acer rubrum* (Red Maple), *Alnus rugosa* (Speckled Alder), *Cornus stolonifera* (Red Ostier Dogwood), and *Geum rivale* (Water Avens).

(continued overleaf)



Distribution of Showy Lady's-slipper



● Verified since 1978
○ Reported prior to 1978

Distribution in Massachusetts by Town

SHOWY LADY'S-SLIPPER (continued)

RANGE

Showy Lady's-slipper ranges from Newfoundland to Manitoba, south to New Jersey, western Pennsylvania, (in the mountains to Georgia and Tennessee), northern Indiana, Missouri, and North Dakota.

POPULATION STATUS

Showy Lady's-slipper is considered a species of "Special Concern" in Massachusetts. Currently, 1978 to present, 15 occurrences have been reported; historically 20 other occurrences have been recorded. The rarity of this plant is attributable to a scarcity of alkaline habitats and destruction of suitable habitats that once existed in the state.